

Western Queens sees a spike in families entering homeless shelters, report finds

A new report found that the number of families entering homeless shelters in western Queens has increased.



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The [Citizens' Committee for Children](#) (CCC), a nonprofit that tracks homelessness in New York, found that pockets of western Queens have seen an increase in the number of families from 2013 through 2015.

In the report, titled ["Keeping Track of Homeless Families,"](#) the CCC examined trends in four boroughs and track areas where homelessness has always been an issue and where the phenomenon is fairly new.

The organization analyzed data such as the number of families with children entering DHS-administered shelters and the change in income and rent from 2008 through 2015. It found that the number of families entering homeless shelters citywide increased almost 23 percent from 2012 to 2016.

Change in Income and Rent, 2008 to 2015 (2015 dollars)
Source: 2008 and 2015 American Community Survey



Researchers said that increase may in part be due to declining family incomes and rising rents. According to the report, “no community district in the city has experienced as great a difference between declining incomes and rising rents than Astoria.”

In 2013, 73 families who call [Astoria](#) home entered a homeless shelter. In 2015, that number jumped to 90 families. During that three-year period, the median income for families with children decreased 14 percent (from \$59,000 to \$51,000) while median rents rose 27 percent.

In [Sunnyside](#) and [Woodside](#), where only 13 families entered a homeless shelter in 2013, that number more than doubled in 2015 to 30 families.

	# of families with children entering homeless shelter in FY 2015	Change from FY 2013	Rate, per 1,000 families in FY 2015	Change from FY 2013
Astoria (Q01)	90	+17	2.4	+0.4
Sunnyside/Woodside (Q02)	30	+17	1.0	+0.5
Jackson Heights/N. Corona (Q03)	54	+14	1.4	+0.4
Elmhurst/S. Corona (Q04)	52	+22	1.7	+0.7

Neighborhoods such as [Jackson Heights](#), [Corona](#) and [Elmhurst](#) are suffering from rental overcrowding, which is defined as more than one person living in one bedroom. In these neighborhoods, approximately 25 percent of households were overcrowded compared to 11 percent citywide.

The number of households facing extreme rent burden — paying more than 50 percent of ones income on rent — also increased in these areas. In Jackson Heights, the share of households facing extreme rent burden rose from 29 to 38 percent, and in Elmhurst/Corona, that number jumped from 30 to 37 percent of households.

CCC argues that since the area has not experienced family homelessness in large numbers before, it does not include many homeless prevention services. The closest [HomeBase](#) site, a city program to help low-income New Yorkers stay in their home, is located in Jamaica. The only other site is located in Far Rockaway.

In June 2017, the CCC along with New Destiny Housing and Enterprise Community Partners released a Family Homelessness Task Force report to address some solutions to the city’s homelessness problem.

Recommendations included strengthening rent stabilization laws to prevent families from becoming homeless, ensuring children and families have services like childcare, quality food and transportation while they’re in shelters and increasing the supply of permanent affordable housing.

To view the full report, visit the [CCC’s website](#).